

National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter

Testimony in support of H. B. 6676

AN ACT CONCERNING LICENSURE OF CLINICAL SOCIAL WORKER

Public Health Committee

Monday, March 16, 2009

My name is Jule Heike Michel and I am testifying today for the Connecticut Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers in support of HB 6676 – an act concerning licensure of clinical social workers. I am here to speak on behalf of recent and current graduates from Master of Social Work Programs in Connecticut. I will graduate from the University of Connecticut School of Social Work this May and have already experienced that obtaining a masters level position in a clinical setting without being licensed is a challenge.

The first time I realized that having a Master's degree in Social Work (MSW) does not necessarily open doors to employment was while I browsed through job advertisements where a majority of them require a licensure. However, in order to apply for licensure MSW graduates need 3000 hours of work experience not just in any social work setting, but exclusively in clinical social work. One of the difficulties agencies face who hire not yet licensed MSW graduates are lower or no reimbursements for services provided by non-licensed clinicians. Therefore, agencies can only afford to hire a limited number of non-licensed professionals.

I learned this from a clinical director who told me during an informational telephone conversation that she will review my application since I was personally recommended and have a unique educational and international background; but that she previously turned down all non-licensed candidates for this position due to the fact that she employs already two non-licensed clinicians.

Being able to obtain a license before entering the work force as a clinical social worker would not only secure employment opportunities for MSW graduates; the licensing exam would also set educational standards that would assure both the employer and the MSW graduate that the future employee is adequately prepared to provide quality clinical social work.

Thank you for your time, and leadership in proposing multi-level licensure for social workers. Voting for this bill will create more opportunities for MSW graduates and ensure that quality clinical social work is provided to our clients and your constituents in Connecticut.